Masmid

June-1929

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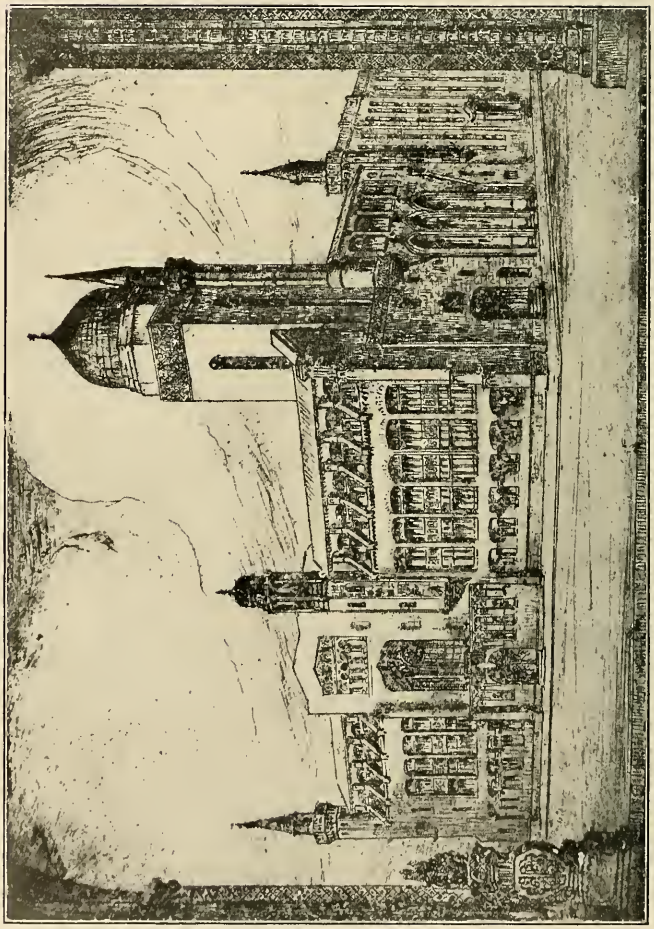

Yeshiva College

YESHIVA COLLEGE

"MASMID"

Number I June, 1929.

CONTENTS

Faculty 5
Yeshiva Collegian—Dr. Bernard Revel 7
Dr. Safir's Review 9
Indictment—C. H. 10
Editorials 12
Barriers—Hudy S. 13
Cycle—A. Herbert Greenberg 14
Diary—B. Z. A. 15
Abram—Trebreh 16
Thirst—Hudy S. 17
Jaffa—Maurice Persky 18
'Round Town—Ralph M. Weisberger 19
Melancholia—Israel Upbin 20
Earthbound—Judah Shapiro 21
The Swimmer—Emanuel Neustadter 22
Renascence—Eli Levine 23
Carousal—Hudy S. 25
The Jewish Youth—where shall he turn?—H. A .S. 26

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FACULTY

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Assistant Professor of Public Speaking, College of the City of New York

Yeshiva College Pioneers

THE YESHIVA COLLEGE dedicates itself to the education of selected groups of Jewish young men. It aims to educate liberally as well as Jewishly, young men who have already been imbued with the spirit and sanctity of the Torah and its teachings, and who consider the understanding of the culture and the faith of historic Judaism an essential part of their education to be acquired during their school years. It seeks to strengthen in the minds of its students this abiding consciousness of the high ideals and the spiritual heritage of the Jewish people, and to develop intellect and character through them and the pursuit of the humanities, by which life is enriched. The Yeshiva College believes that an understanding of the background of Judaism, and its contribution to human progress, will quicken and deepen the student's insight into his liberal studies.

It aims to afford its students a sympathetic and understanding approach to the record of Israel's part in the history of human life and thought and a recognition of its bearing upon our future and that of mankind, thus making Jewish knowledge and culture an integral part of life and thought today, so that in time Jewish studies may come to mean not the isolated survey of statically presented happenings and attitudes, but the dynamic consideration of a spirit and philosophy of life vital to all fields of human understanding and progress.

It aims to foster this harmonious growth, in which the bases of modern knowledge and culture in the fields of art, science, and service, are blended with the bases of Jewish culture, to train its students in the spirit of intelligent and high-minded enthusiasm, and develop informed and devoted sons in the spirit and faith of Israel, able to recognize the essential harmony of life.

The Yeshiva College is no longer a vision. A small but eager student body, under the guidance of a faculty sympathetic in outlook and sound in scholarship, with the active co-operation of an advisory board of eminent scholars and educators is completing the work of the first year of College work. Many non-Jews concerned with the educational and spiritual progress of the land hail the Yeshiva College as of valid and rich promise. The opportunity for growth along the determined lines is present. May it in time be given to the Yeshiva College to bring into American educational life, as its contribution to the best in the spirit of the land, Israel's educational and cultural ideals and to help widen and intensify the abiding values of the spirit of Israel; steadfastness and deep devotion to the ideals essential to man's spiritual well being; to be the forerunner of a more intensive Jewish life, that shall increasingly share in and help to form the creative cultural currents that constitute the spiritual being of America.

BERNARD REVEL.

Executive Council

(Reading left to right)
Judah Shapiro, Sec'y, A. Herbert Greenberg, Editor
Harry Stein, Athletic Manager, Julius Washer, Pres.
Israel Upbin, Vice-Pres.

Dr. SAFIR'S REVIEW

The Yeshiva College exists to bring a harmonious opportunity to the "Masmid," to offer the devoted student, in the most favorable conditions of accessibility and of sympathetic atmosphere and instruction, the work of the general college at the same time that he is carrying on his intensive Jewish studies in the Yeshiva.

Springing from a need felt for supplying the best graduates of the Talmudical Academy this means of continuing their work, the College had its legal beginning in an amendment to the Charter of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, on March 29, 1928, when the University of the State of New York permitted the change of the name to the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and Yeshiva College, and authorized the offering of courses leading to the degrees of B. A. and B. S. The work of organization was at once begun, coincident with the conclusion of the building campaign, so that by the time the magnificent new edifice on the highest point of Manhattan Island was well under way, the College had already begun its work, in the temporary home offered by the West Side Jewish Center. With a faculty chosen to meet its peculiar needs, and an associate faculty of professors from great nearby institutions of higher learning, the work of the Freshman Year was offered to an entering class of 30 students. Selected from a lengthy list of applicants, and representing seven States of the Union, these young men of the Yeshiva, with a confidence similar to that of the young pioneers who ten years before entered the Talmudical Academy, entrusted themselves to the new College, for the studies of their academic career.

And what has been the result? At the close of the first year of the work of the Yeshiva College any definite statement on the part of the College authorities would be premature. Let judgment rest with the State University, which, after inspection of the work and study of the plans of the College, has already approved the work of the second year, and placed Yeshiva College upon the State list of approved institutions of higher learning, authorized to receive holders of State scholarships. Among faculty and students alike there is great satisfaction in these signs of progress, and a deep sense that the work itself has been worth while. All look forward eagerly to the work of the second year.

It is in the coming year that the Yeshiva College must grow toward its justification. As the present class moves through its remaining years, as successive groups of students enter upon their four-year course, the work will widen, the opportunities for specialization will grow, whether for cultural or further professional ends, and the Yeshiva College will rise toward its proper stature. It will never be a larger college, for its aim is to serve only that portion of American Jewish youth definitely

devoted to learning, which feels that both Jewish and general knowledge are desirable for a cultural development and essential to a rounded Jewish personality. But it hopes to be a college in which the harmony of life may be revealed and a cultural and spiritual point of view may be inculcated; so that those who come to know its influence may bear the spirit of their Alma Mater into the wider university of life, and through the activity of their later days realize in their own being, and in the lives around them, the true culture and devotion to knowledge and to the things of the spirit which it is the hope of the Yeshiva College to sustain.

INDICTMENT

A mental
Reign of Terror,
Of Nihilism,
Thoughtless bombs exploding
Shattering idols to dust, with
cruel heedlessness.
Iconoclast!
Radical!
Agnostic intelligentsia!
It all ends in dreary isolation,
Sedate chaos
And a huge blank waste
Of elemental disintegration.

C. H.

Board of Editors

(Seated left to right)
Emanuel Neustadter, A. Herbert Greenberg, Editor-in-chief
Judah Shapiro
(Standing)
Ralph M. Weisberger, Israel Upbin, George E. Gross

"MASMID" is a Hebrew word meaning a devoted student. In his immortal Hebrew poem, "The Masmid," Chaim Nachman Bialik dwells on the travails of the Masmid—the assiduous scholar. The Masmid, too, has his mind momentarily bewitched by a Tempter calling him out of the seclusion of intellectuality into a carefree world of sunshine and laughter and the shelter of trees. But Tradition and Self-Sacrifice are necromancers who conjure up taboos to send the Tempter away. And the passing lure of the sunshine and the laughter and the shelter of the trees have made a steadfast, resolute heart out of a dreamy one.

—xx—

I have often thought of Yeshivas as basking within an enveloping warmth of seclusion and the quiet of sanctity. Not the sanctity of a mighty temple of Solomon, but the solemnity of a Beth Medrash and of quiet assiduous scholars. Though their glory is in obscurity yet there is reverence in their solitude.

But awe of them is waning. It is disgruntling to hear sight-seers, wandering through our corridors, remark—good naturedly enough,

"Isn't he picturesque—that fellow there—shaking so and humming that quaint melody!"

From another, with a snort, "Picturesque—huh! He could use a shave, I'll say!"

From sanctified they have become quaint and picturesque. It is disheartening. Stilled now is the acclaim of those scholars who had so wondrously preached Mosaic law. For the din of greeting elaborate buildings and ceremonies has obscured them. I have often wondered whether outsiders give a thought to those of whom these buildings house.

Grandiloquence is not a Masmid's lot. His is a mighty tradition, a lofty ideal. He stores it within him—not aggressively but silently and with firmness . . . .

Perhaps the fault lies with those curio-seekers, with their superficial spectators' curiosity. Although hospitality bids me welcome them, escort them through the buildings, acknowledge their comments on the architectural genius of the place, I cannot help resenting their utter apathy toward the ideal the Yeshiva symbolizes. If they were aware of my mental discourtesy and hostility, they would evade the Yeshiva, I know. Then again, perhaps the fault lies with my own unconciliatory ideal. It is not I who rebel. It is the mighty eloquence of the pallid immobile face of the Masmid that turns coldly towards the visitors. I often hopelessly feel that these patient students are obscured in this gigantic edifice of stone and sparkling metal. On one hand I weigh our grandiose buildings and on the other the scholars with their fervor of learning. And I feel the pith of the buildings is feebler and of less substance and permanence—strangely enough. But a joyous chord sings within me for I have heard these towering walls ring with the chant of the Masmid's learning. And I know that the spirit has conquered the mortar and the lime.

BARRIERS

I sailed alone
That star-lit night.
From my seat upon the deck
I saw
Shaggy hills—
The city-man's mountains—
Hard and brazen
Against the soft flesh of the
Sky.
Along the shore,
The cars that rushed along
Puffing, panting,
Out of breath;
With one great gleaming eye
To light and show the way.
From afar,
Two signal lights,
I saw,
Like two green eyes
That lurked in hidden shadows.
And then atop a mount
The house lights of a far-off home,
Outshone
By the twinkling glow of the sidereal fires.
I breathed deep
The new-born air,
And stretched my arms;
And stretched them farther still
When no barrier
Barred them,
In their search for freedom.

HUDY S.

Cycle

By A. Herbert Greenberg

Youth

It is the youth in me, seething like carefree laughter stemmed by a restraining palm, that is drawn to the vigor of the ocean. We exchange secrets and histories and often artless boasts until the hush of the sunset puts weariness into our talks. And then we dream. In my dreams the longings I have confided to the ocean are fulfilled—and I always feel the nearness of the ocean.

At sunset the ocean is mighty. The setting sun showers it with golden tints. At the edge of this gold-strewn expanse the sun sinks like a fiery galleon, to be lost in the cold bosom of the sea. Then a breeze freshens and the ocean laps soft lullabies and caressing endearments. . . .

The ocean is sincere—with the sincerity of Dostoyevsky's "Idiot." Sometimes, when the ocean is raging and bellowing, I sit on the beach with my knees clasped and I exult in its mighty idiotic fretting.

Its moods are not intensified or dissipated by pretentious thoughts. They are spasms of naive outbursts and—presto! they are spent. The enormous strength surging through its bosom can be surly, and it can gurgle like a cooing child—as if its burly spirit were being curbed by our God of Tides. Then the ocean is silent and hides deeply within itself. And I watch it and I am amused, for I know its mood will pass like a fleet, chill breeze, and its quips and pranks return.

The ocean is a fine story-teller. It boasts of sturdy seamen who had set out along its shores in frail vessels. The ocean laughed at their puny, futile voyages. In cruel, capricious amusement it tossed their tiny vessels against cliffs or swallowed them into its depths.

And once in pure fun it let a dreaming sailor from Genoa traverse its wide bosom. . . .

Then ships with metal sides undertook the same voyages; darkening the heavens with black smoke and spattering the ocean with oil. Their proud efforts were amusing and very often annoying. What had been before a prank was now becoming commonplace. And the ocean would heave its mighty shoulders and would swallow a ship and its terror-stricken passengers in a mighty gulp. Survivors claimed they had heard screams of hysteria rising from the ocean; but the ocean knew it was no hysteria they had heard. It was only a chuckle. . . .

That was my youth's version—the impetuous, carefree version of my youth.

Age

Many years have elapsed and I have become old and feeble. Cares have taken me away from the ocean. The flush of water through a faucet makes me start at times with pangs of memories. I see my ocean evaporating—and its water run through labyrinthean pipes; its freshness tumbling into fetid, rusty sinks, its green clearness in clean tiled basins. Then the heavens mollify the fretting ocean with stinging downpours of rain. And the ocean smarts with the joy of the stinging and lashes and fumes in maniacal ecstasy.

But I am old and feeble. I despair to think of how my mind has become musty and worn, while the ancient, childish ocean lives so vigorously—perennially young.

I sometimes feel the ocean has fooled me. Our talks seem to have been just puppy-tales and not the mighty confidences I used to enjoy. I still long, nonetheless, for the ocean's companionship Besides, my youth has passed so blandly and with such soothing indifference. . . .

My life has receded into the impotence of retrospect. I cannot come to grips with myself I cannot identify the laughing, mythical youth who spent carefree hours musing with the ocean a half-century ago. Eternities seem to have passed before me and they are merely chipped fragments of colossal existence. I have hoped that the ocean would grow aged, too. It would be nice for two old friends to bask in the sunshine and swap stories. . . .

Across arid waste-lands, through bustling cities and finally to the brink of the ocean—exultant! So Balboa must have felt when he gazed across the huge expanse of "peaceful waters" that separated him from the horizon. My own waters are peaceful, too, now.

Night is falling and above the oppressive hush I can hear the soft, endless lapping—like a mighty cat lapping up milk. It soothes me, that lapping! Like a mighty, passive cat lapping up the edge of the beach with inward peace and ease. It has set a chord athrobbing within me and a gulp at my throat. Between its lapping I can feel the staid, mystic ocean telling me:

"It is the beginning of all things. The Spirit

of God moved upon the face of the waters—the purity, the deep fathoms of the waters. . . . Generations come and generations go and everything stands in place; but the Spirit of God had moved upon the face of the sacred waters and had left there the silent wisdom of His creation. Impetuous generations, heedlessly unaware of the sentiment of the creation of the ocean where the Divine had traced the infinite permanence and the order of things. Generations are feeble, everything is moving, hurtling—except the silent, permanent waters."

Creation astounds me—its simplicity, its utter permanence and enduring wisdom and aloofness from trivialities. My Bible and Koheleth are forgotten. The ocean is telling me all this!

Night has fallen silently. The lapping goes on incessantly and omnipresently. I am not isolated and querulous any more. I am part of the rhythm of the lapping, I am part of the glow of the reflected moon, I am part of the vast expanse of ocean. No! I feel equally vast and immense. But time is moving. Night will fade into day and with it this night's glamour. Every moment now is pregnant with fervor and futile understanding. I see now that it is the transcendental that stirs me; the groping in the darkness that hurts and enthuses me.

Tonight alone will remain poignant for me forever; it cannot be utterly dispelled by the dawn. Nor can it be continued by the dawn for the beguiling, insipid cares of Life's living will shackle me. Life will blur my vision and my brain become unwieldy. If time could but stop now and things cease to be.

Despair is my pain and refuge. I know there will shackle me. Life will blur my vision and I suffer with the knowledge of their inevitable regime. I would evade life in the rapture of my despair—like heavy clouds crammed into my head. Stop! This treachery is within me. I seek refuge in the gloom of the shadows, but time will pierce them. Then I will have sad, recurring memories but not the intense melancholia of shrugging off life. Bah! The utter will be more moods, oppressive with reality; and treachery of everything!

DIARY

There are times we set out in the morning,
Open-mouthed, for light;
And we are prepared to gulp down
The sun in the heavens
With the thirst of a giant
To quench the emotions of youth.
And times come when there falls upon our heads
But one solitary ray;
And our souls, from this small quantity of light,
Bow down, become weary,
Yearn for darkness,
And, subdued, retire into the shadow.

B. Z. A.

Abram

By TREBREH

"And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot, the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from the Ur of Chaldeas to go into the land of Canaan; and they came into Haran and dwelt there."—Genesis, Chapter XI.

I

HIS LIFE was a hurly-burly of platitudes, young Abram felt. He was bewildered at its vagueness. Within him flowed sentiment, kindliness for his brethren. But his surroundings flowed like a sluggish river—wearily, feebly. He fancied with trepidation the ready niche in life that awaited his occupancy. He was naively bewildered—like a frightened deer separated from the herd.

At night Abram wandered below starry heavens, attracted strangely by the twinkles in the endless space above him. They were so utterly beyond his ken they pained him with heartache and despair. They offered him refuge from his evanescent environment at least. They offered him a void whose immensity he could despair of. His own void he lived in was so utterly petty and trivial and crushing in its petty way. He did not feel contemptuous of himself, for his life was like the will-o'-the-wisp. It always seemed distantly and vaguely annoying, although even under closer scrutiny he seemed to be basking in content.

Sarai, always sedate, cool and firm, did not soothe Abram now. Abram longed for the balm of an uplifted face, a sympathetic glistening tear on a tawny cheek gleaming in a cool, shimmering dusk. Not a cold sapience, but something warm and enveloping!

The dark-eyed, lissome women of Haran lived vigorously and did not snivel over the day's tasks. In passing they always had a beckoning, significant nod. They had strength; strength to lift heavy earthen jars of water, strength to embrace with passionate, crushing hugs—their lissome bodies straining and swaying like an adder. Like the adder, they had venom in them, too. Abram knew. He could see it in the glints deep within their eyes. They had cruel laughter that had a mingling of hysteria and derision in it. Laughter that chilled one's marrow and left one shivering as with the ague!

II

The grass had shriveled into dry wisps and almost endless wanderings away from Haran had failed to discover new pastures. The herds were woefully thinning out and the Haranites walked about in ill-temper. Drought and winds had ruined pastures and hunger weakened the fretful nomads.

Abram walked among the Haranites, who turned away from him to hide their resentment.

"Brethren of my heart," Abram cried out despairingly, "your gaunt cheeks rend my breast more than is the power of your keen blades. I have taken you from Haran and you have built homes in strange places. Here you have famine; in Haran you can break bread with my father, cold Terah, and with leering Baal. To the south is Egypt, and there, too, is food to fill out your cheeks and your paunches. But you will live there shackled to content and gluttony. More than your hunger for food is your gnawing hunger for freedom. In Egypt you will have food, but you will live in fettered hospitality.

"Do Eroch or Babylon call you? Do you crave for the stifling crowds that din the ears? Babylon of the manifold voices and ugly cries; its huge towers that have housed mighty Nimrod. The people of Babylon cannot leave their city. It is their pasture, and their gluttony has made them add wall upon wall. Now they are shadowed in darkness and a flicker of sunshine dazzles them. They are bustling but, like a tumbling brook, they know not whither.

"Sturdy brothers and loving sisters! Egypt calls with fattened cattle. Our gaunt desert calls with bare, outstretched hands, but with sunshine and stars at night and a cool breeze. And it has the evening music of Anu.

"In Egypt our women will be coveted like the murky river covets the cool, rapid streams. But our destinies are in Egypt; lest we bury each other in the sands we love. But our sojourning there must be short, ere we, in crawling obeisance to comfort, forget the desert of our

youth."

The Haranites had gathered about Abram in uneasy, shuffling groups; their pallid faces flushing weakly. Abram's pleas were faltering. His opinions, haunted by doubts, had an exhortative appeal of sincerity—more to convince himself of their truths than to convince his audience.

A sturdy woman, with arms akimbo, called out to Abram.

"Come, brother. Egypt will not hurt us. We are not frail as the willow. We are like the bramble that needs no tender care. We will feed in Egypt and we will be gone. Jus a bit hungry are we."

She turned away resolutely. Abram looked after her and he saw the bare soles of her feet, gashed and bleeding, where the sandals had been worn away. And he thought of sedate Sarai—perfect mistress of his household—calmly awaiting his return. And he thought of the Haranite women who would only be remembered on infrequent ruminations; like the stirring up of the faint embers of smouldering, poignant memories.

THIRST

I am vain in Love,
And often muse
Upon the mites of doubt
That gnaw into the solemn,
Sacred pledges of Love.
Love and Friendship,
Are mine.
Still I crave,
I want,
I thirst.

. . .

That thirst,
I think,
Will never be quenched
Till someone shed,
Over me,
Tears salted with the overflow
Of a loving heart.

HUDY S.

Jaffa

By MAURICE PERSKY

I shall never forget the day I saw Jaffa for the first time. I was leaning over the rail while the ship was slowly swinging into position out in the harbor. It seemed to me that Jaffa was passing in review before my eyes.

What I first noticed was the steep crag at one end of the city, which made me think of a fort. Out of the sea this monster of stone rose, forming the natural harbor of Jaffa. Its dizzy height seemed to mock the little city sprawling at its feet. What arrested my attention were the houses that are built on this huge, protruding rock. They rise tier upon tier, like the seats in a huge stadium. Up the steep incline they fight their way, those houses, until one of them—there is room for no more—seats itself upon the top, grinning triumphantly. Old houses they are, and mud-colored. Squat little houses with the gaping cracks in their walls showing plainly in the light of the blazing sun.

Slowly the moving ship left this jagged peninsula behind, but my eye lingered. Still full of wonder and admiration, my eye again traced the irregular outline of this miniature Gibraltar and finally rested upon the little hut seated all the way up there—on the top of the world. I envied that little hut.

But soon the "Old City," as Jaffa is called, came into full view. It wasn't much of a city! Not what we call a city, anyway. Countless houses, just like those on the hill—houses of every conceivable size, shap, and stage of decay—jammed together haphazardly. Here was an utter disregard for all the protective and sanitary features of even our smallest villages. One thing about this jumble of houses left me wondering. They seemed to begin at no definite place, nor seemed to end—but mistily vanished in faint silhouettes.

Still trying to discover the reason for this effect, I was distracted by someting white a little distance behind the dark mass of the "Old City." The "Old City" is built on level ground and behind it there rises a bit of a hill—a stretch of ground on a higher level. This hill seemed to be covered with something white that shone brightly in the sunlight. The ship slid closer and I saw there were houses on this hill, too, but not like the others. These were sturdy, bright, white houses. The ship was moving nearer. Everything was becoming clearer and clearer now.

There was a city on top of this hill—a "New City." So new that everything was white as newly-fallen snow. Houses, pavements, streets, all so white that they dazzled the eye. It was bewildering. A modern city at this end of the world! City? Why it was Paradise! Paradise come to earth.

"Boy, that's Tel Aviv!" I said to myself, unable to say more.

Yes, that was Tel Aviv, the "Jewish City"—the "New City." Some difference! I thought, looking back at that dark blot they call the "Old City"—between the rock and the hill.

Yes, some difference!

No sooner had the ship dropped anchor than we were rowed ashore. The harbor at Jaffa is, as yet, not provided with docks, and ships cast anchor quite a distance from shore.

I ought to have been happy now that I had finally landed. I had often thought I should be the most joyful of beings when I should be done with rolling ships and stormy seas. Yet, I was far from happy. I couldn't understand it.

Quite probably my surroundings had a great deal to do with my depression. Those old, mysterious houses—the narrow, winding alleys—the overhanging balconies that completely hid the sun and the sky. Those fierce-looking Arabs, dressed like the shepherds pictured in the old story books of the Bible. It was unbelievable!

Time seemed to have rolled back a score of centuries, and I seemed to be in another world, in another age.

I felt oppressed and miserable, and then I became afraid. I seemed to have been picked up and dropped down at the other end of the world. And when I thought that I should have to live here—forever, perhaps—I instinctively looked back to the ship. How large, how safe it seemed to me then! How kindly, how sympathetically it seemed to be looking at me. It was my only hope, my only link with the outside world. I wanted to run to it, to shelter myself between its huge, steel sides—to leave this place forever. And when I realized that it, too, would soon be gone, my eyes burned with tears. I felt like one who,

marooned on a strange isle, helplessly sees his last hope of rescue slip by.

But it was too late to turn back. Too well did I know it. With heavy, dragging tread, I blindly made my way up the hill . . . . .

Three weeks later! What a change! How happy and carefree I felt! I was never so joyful in all my life. I went on one sight-seeing tour after another. One round of coaches, buses, and hotels. I had never expected all this!

All I had to do was to travel about and see the sights. Pass through the old, deserted towns that are mentioned so often in the Bible and pay my respects at the tombs of our holy ancestors. I visited the little, picturesque colonies that have been founded but yesterday. I witnessed sights that many would gladly have given years of their life to see! Not a care, not a thought in the world! Only the hope that I should have enough time to stop at all the places that I had in mind.

I was fully at home now and eager to see ever more; yet in all my joy one thing troubled me. I couldn't understand why I cried when I first set foot on Palestine!

'ROUND TOWN

By RALPH M. WEISBERGER

Harlem

There's a relieving coarseness about Harlem, the Negro ghetto. The black holes that pass for doorways conceal pits of secrets, you somehow feel. You see thick-lipped, broad-smiled bucks, overbrimming with complete, naive satisfaction and with life, shuffling out of the doorways and throwing back into the blackness hoarse, chortling farewells. And you envy the crudeness of living in this Negro 'pale."

On sunny days those black holes pour out darkies like an overturned flagon pours out thick, dark wine. Negresses in flimsy ginghams, darkie lads in patched corduroys, and huge, clumsy bucks—sleeves rolled and black chest bared—come tumbling out of the darkness into the dazzling sunlight. Then there's laughter and a free, easy gait for a Negro. A white feels stilted with insincere, feigned aloofness. And you notice a young Negro student in prim "white's clothes" and you somehow feel he mocks the conversion and sanity that keeps him from mingling freely with his color and keeps him under servitude—mentally rebellious for liberation.

At night all life hides within those gaping black holes that pass for doorways. . . .

* * *

Coney Island—Summer

There is no individual glimpse of Coney Island that can truly represent the composite impression of the Island. Screeching of sirens, Steeplechase, babel of voices, brilliance, Luna, fops sauntering on corners, Bowery, Feltman's—they all fuse into a vague impression of a trance of utter carefreeness, and then wane like stimulating drug slowly losing its potence.

Just outside the brilliance and the noise are the slums of the Island. Frail bungalows are jammed together and in them are families indifferent to the reek of bad drainage and sweating bodies.

There is a glamor attached to the Island. Shop-girls strut there with significant anxiety radiating their creased, harassed features. Aged couples, with strange, new-born smiles, go there, too—fumbling their way through the crowds. Then there are exultant young couples and bewildered, stumbling foreigners painfully aware of their obscure presence. And calling from the side-shops are wheedling, grasping red-faced individuals. Their select prey are foreigners. . . .

Winter

The shops are boarded up and at night the Island is pitch dark and silent, green knowing eyes gleaming in the darkness. The old boards creak and sigh as if with weariness. They seem to be mocking the eager soul of the Island, those warped boards—wrinkling their brows in senility and contempt for youth and laughter.

Melancholia

By Israel Upbin

HAVE you ever had that sighing, restless feeling while alone in your room? It makes you want to shout out loudly, and you are about to cry out feebly under tightly-pressed lips—half giving way and immensely troubled for slipping so far . . . chilled, lonely and isolated. Things are spectres, listening and buzzing with their hushed whispers as they loom about you—watching you and shadowing you . . . . and a tremulous sigh slips out of you before you can stop it . . . . and you are holding back a sob.

Thoughts of your folks may have set you off dreaming maudlin dreams. Everything is distant and vague. You're tiny—too chagrined and bewildered with yourself to . . . . well . . . . cry . . . . or at least stop that twitching and aching—and the burning in your eyes. Outside, down the corridor, there's laughter—and you somehow feel there's a dull, rasping edge to it. Hoarse laughter, rushing through the corridors and stealing through your heart—leaving you cold and forlorn. You look wildly about you, your face twisted into a blank wry smile, to see if anybody is watching you. . . .

Life is futile and overbearing. What the trouble is you don't know exactly, but you *do* feel things *are* harsh. You seek mental refuge in the familiarity of your home—at least the reminiscences of it. You dream. There's that Morris chair, your feet dangling lazily over the edge—you half sleeping, half day-dreaming in solid comfort . . . . Narrow strip of garden in front of your home. It's nothing much, but yours is the only house on the street with a garden. Though that bit of "earthly salvation" from mediocrity is really nothing more than a few tufts of grass—almost withered wisps when you left them last—and a few bedraggled ferns, you're fond of it. Just now you'd be straightening out that broken branch on that fern. . .

There's warmth and comfort in your home You feel everything there is part of you; where your thighs had worn off the edges of the leather upholstering and where your idle, dreamy scratching had made a gash in the wood. There's nothing prim or aloof about your home. Cigarette ashes and butts are strewn haphazardly near ash trays. Very few butts, thrown with your erring aim, have reached their mark. Then again, all the other houses on your street have an inevitable effulgence of laced floor-lamps but your home, devoid of this unsure-footed device, has an oddity you would not trade for the primmest of conventions. Two crossed foils, a few tattered banners, and some tennis rackets arrayed on the walls give your home the only virile air in the neighborhood. Here, you have sly shadows to shudder off . . . . Gee! you would like to be home—well—no—then again . . . . yes, it would feel good! And then your eyes are suddenly brimming over with salty tears and you feel utterly lost!

You hear your roomie's whistle along the corridor. You rub your eyes frantically, bewildered. What to do next? . . . Open a book and start whistling! Make a mess of the tune and stop whistling as,

"Poking in that book again!"

Your roomie standing over you belligerently, puzzledly. You feel guilty and ashamed but something hard and resolute stiffens in your chest. You curse him peevishly and he slips out of the room, scratching his head dubiously and in mock despair.

You fling the book across the room! Damn! Pick it up again, straighten the pages and go stolidly to bed.

That night you hear your roomie mumbling to himself.

"Don't know what's come over that chap lately . . . . can't talk to him! And reading his book upside down . . . ."

And you curse wildly under your breath, and make wild grimaces. but you're afraid to disturb him . . . and you fall asleep, utterly exhausted! But with the realization that you'll meet him to morrow with laughter and gibes!

Nit: 'How would you find the height of a building, using a thermometer?"

Wit: "Tie the thermometer on a string and lower it down until it reaches the ground. Then measure the string."

EARTHBOUND

Wet, dark night!
Harsh, cold rain!
Rough, wild wind!
Let me sleep!

While all were plunged in senseless torpor,
Two sleepless nights I spent.
Purged was the world of human souls.
Only divine clay was strewn upon the earth.
Souls were on an ephemeral holiday—
Only my spirit, shackled to the earth
By worldly cares,
Did not rise.
And in the silence my soul clamored for her soul
In vain.
But yesterday she came to me
To soothe me in my yearning;
I was happy
And I thought I had outwitted you,
Implacable world!
But you still keep sleep from my eyes.

Wet, dark night!
Harsh, cold rain!
Rough, wild wind!
Let me sleep!

JUDAH SHAPIRO

The Swimmer

By Emanuel Neustadter

Alithe, naked body glided along purple waters. Each move had in it the graceful sway of an eel. Bulging muscles showed power and coordination behind every stroke.

He was not a well-oiled machine, this human swimmer! He was a healthy, well-attuned animal; muscles rippling, power in every plunge. Healthy heart pumping blood into expectant, demanding muscles exultant with strength and gliding fearlessly along at a plunging, unslackening pace. . . .

Hours of it! Purple waters now black, inky waters. The muscles alone must sense and respond and direct and ward off. Dull mind! It will not rebel and mislead that graceful, swaying momentum. It was the resistance and push of these tense muscles alone that would carry the swimmer past this silent, dense darkness ahead of him. Mental justification and stimulus were feeble! So he had trained himself.

Hours more! And then a faint trembling in the muscles, a bit of irregularity in the rhythm. Then an arm fluttered unsteadily and sent up some spray instead of cleaving the water sharply like a keen knife. Hesitancy, bewilderment, and some floundering about—then the rhythm had to be started again. But now there is something lacking! Is it an incomplete tug of the muscles, a half-hearted urging forward?

Driftwood floated on those black waters. It was part of the instinct's task to sense these obstacles and to evade them without interrupting the rhythm. In mid-stroke the swimmer suddenly saw a black piece of driftwood rise up beneath his face. It scraped his neck and shoulders and drifted on. The rhythm was not interrupted, the faltering stroke was completed—but a red, burning gash ran down from his neck to his shoulders. Slowly, measuredly the muscles wearied and the rhythm dragged. Then a muddled brain dictated rebellion to overworked muscles. A frenzy seized the swimmer! His strokes were becoming feebler and feebler, his breathing more and more labored, his circulation more and more sluggish. Cold, fear, weariness, bewilderment, despair — they played havoc with him. Then he sought within himself some drug, some hypnosis to still these strange, new hurts. Slowly and resolutely he drugged his mind. Then oblivion! A dull machine now of sinews and pliant fibers. The rhythm gathering speed, the monotonous, endlessly flailing strokes held their pace. The mind and soul were stilled. The flailing strokes kept on through the night. . . .

Dawn was faintly breaking when the throngs along the beach saw the swimmer. He came nearer and nearer and then clambered ashore. People rushed to carry him off on their shoulders. They jumped back, aghast! The swimmer was clammy, pale and cold. And he was asleep!

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

"Gosh, no! This gun isn't loaded. Watch. . . ."

"Chicanery . . ."

. . .

Teacher (to exceptionally dumb pupil): "Now, Johnny, if I had five eggs in this basket and laid three on the table, how many would I have?"

Johnny (brightly): "Eight!"

A titanotheriid has arrived in this country from Asia. That didn't mean much to us until the scientists kindly explained that a titanotheriid is a perissodactyle ugulate.

. . .

Consensus of Opinion of Lectures:—The longer the spoke, the bigger the tire.

Renascence

By Eli Levine

EACH DAY, when the shades of night came, I felt a heavy load pressing at my heart. A mysterious something gnawed there incessantly. Then my mind would shake off all worldly thoughts and would concentrate its whole attention on this unknown craving. I had a vague idea of the nature of this yearning, but I could not place my finger on any particular wish, or name a special desire and say "This is it!" The most intense mental suffering would always come at night when I lay in bed. Doubts concerning every accepted idea would agitate my mind for hours; and there came also a great fear as to the results of such doubts. The bed became my rack, and the thought of having to sleep there every night was agonizing.

As the days passed by my anguish grew greater. Skeptical thoughts assailed me with such vigor that I began to question everything I heard or saw. If I heard a person doing a kind or a charitable deed I never failed to assign a selfish reason for his action. I thought everybody a hypocrite. My dearest friends became actors. I saw the whole world as a dark sham where people lurked to slay and cheat, to accomplish covetous and selfish ends. I despised all laws. I considered them a long chain forged by an aspiring ruling class for the purpose of enslaving the weaker members of society. Seeing this world inhabited by wretches, I could not think of a noble Creator. This last idea became alarming, for religion had always been my last refuge from evil and from evil thoughts. To religion I used to flee from my dark musings and evil notions, and here was the Evil One preparing to attack my very last stronghold! My mind seemed to work in a negative manner, for I always saw the seamy side of things; the base and the sordid. As I reviewed the story of the Bible, my mind rejected all the accepted, noble motives for the actions of the Biblical heroes. I supplied instead selfish, despicable motives. As I relate it here it must seem to the reader as though I had yielded easily to these dark thoughts. No! These ungodly ideas came only after a great struggle marked by keen mental and physical anguish.

Two irreconcilable enemies staged a fierce battle in my mind. The contenders, Tradition and Skepticism, gathered their forces into two strong battle lines, each eager to blast the other. As long as I kept my mind busy with diversions, the enemies would only stir impatiently, but when the day was over and I lay on my couch hoping for sleep, the impetuous antagonists would start their mad struggle. One side would build up strong, seemingly impregnable, arguments; but the other side would soon batter them to pieces. The pitched battle would go on for hours, racking my brain to and fro, until gentle sleep would take pity upon me and spread its restful wings over my weary brains and eyelids

For several weeks Skepticism was the victor in this struggle, greatly to the dismay of my soul. At first I wandered about the city like one gone crazy over the loss of his dearest friend. I felt the effect of the lack of faith. I was lonely and depressed, although surrounded by a company of jolly friends. My heart felt empty and my whole being devoid of life. In spirit I avoided my friends and I sought deserted places where I could weep and bemoan my loss undisturbed.

A vague uneasiness took possession of my body. Every noise and shadow seemed to threaten me. The nights became devils of torture. They brought appalling dreams that made my soul cringe with fear. I saw the ghosts of my ancestors rise from their graves and assemble around my bed. Full of horror, I jumped out of bed and turned to flee. But the ghouls stretched out their pale, bony hands and restrained me. What frightful, raging faces they had! They put their heads together in consultation. Their council ended, they seized me and carried me away. Intense fear possessed me and I tried to wrest myself free, but their grasp was firm and I could only squirm vainly, in increasing pain. Through dark, winding passages they took me. Soon they halted. They opened a door and pushed me through. At first all was dark, but soon a faint glimmer appeared, and I saw a deep, yawning abyss beneath me. I shrieked in mortal terror—and awoke.

Similar nightmares haunted me often. One night I dreamed more lengthily:

It was a gray, cold day. The wind was blowing fiercely, sharply lashing my face, and whining like an old cur. I found myself in a wild, deserted place. In front of me I saw the dark outline of a dense forest whose trees towered to the sky. To my left stretched a vast desert. Only far, far to my right could I distinguish any dwellings. Desiring solitude, I turned from the inhabited side and walked upon

the desert. For hours and hours I kept walking. Finally evening overtook me. Hungry, cold and exhausted I decided to seek the houses. After many hours of walking I neared them. Now they looked like splendid palaces. But, alas! a wide, surging stream barred my way. The wind became colder, chilling me to the marrow. Suddenly all the palaces were lit up brilliantly. I heard enchanting strains of heavenly music—music which made my heart burst with longing. A sweet fragrance of flowers came from across the stream and cast a magic spell over me. With longing eyes I looked across the stream.

"You won't keep me, O, ye wild waters!" I cried with rage. Quickly I plunged into the swollen, angry stream, but a great wave raised me high into the air and with mighty force hurled me back. Again and again I tried—but in vain. Exhausted, I sat down on the sand and wept. Then I heard a harsh sound coming from the stream.

"Stay there, faithless man of the earth, for your soul is forever doomed to the cold!"

When I awoke in the morning the dream seemed very real. I could still see the desert, the forest, and the foaming stream. I felt very uneasy. Although I usually held little faith in dreams, this dream agitated my mind to distraction. Considering the vanity of all worldly ambition and the shortness of man's life on this planet, I grew sick at heart at the thought of being inevitably buried in a dark, cold grave from which the dream had said I should never rise. The words "for your soul is doomed" haunted me day and night. I did not deserve such a great punishment, I thought. For I reasoned, although my mind has been temporarily inclined to Skepticism, yet I have been firm to tradition. My soul, despite my mind's destructive reasoning, had always clung to religion and had driven upon the accepted truths of humanity. Why, then, should I be responsible forever for the temporary lure of my mind's new religion? In despair I prayed to God to save me from this fate.

The Day of Atonement came. I cajoled and trained my mind to forget all doubts and to place utter faith in God's wisdom. I was full of joy when I saw my mind yield to my soul. All day I remained in the synagogue. The old Jews with their long gray beards, in their spotless white robes, offered me refuge in their religious reverence and piety. Apart from the whole congregation, in a dark corner of the synagogue, I saw an aged man. His wrinkled face was flushed by religious fervor and his hollow eyes gleamed with a holy fire. He seemed to pray more enrapturedly than anyone else. As I gazed on this patriarch I little thought of what part this holy man might later play in my life

As I saw the whole congregation swaying to and fro, striking their hearts with their fists and confessing all their sins I felt ashamed and petty Timorously I prayed and I felt a heavy load roll off my heart. When the sun was about to set I began again to feel uneasy. I felt the Evil One at work in my mind. Soon the old struggle returned. Skepticism became master of the situation and cried to my soul:

"Hypocrite! What have you been doing all day?"

Then the Evil One answered in a mocking tone:

"Praying to his Creator!" My racked soul cringed in fear and moaned heartrendingly.

The services ended and I went home full of dark melancholy. Days passed and I became more and more depressed, writhing in hypochondria. I tried to escape from myself by wandering in dark forests and deserted places. . .

One warm spring day, when the sun was shining in all its brilliance and the whole countryside was abloom, I strayed in a nearby forest. I came upon a path stretching far away in front of me, and lined on both sides by birch trees. I saw an old man hunched at the foot of a birch tree. He was reciting the first Psalm of David

"Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly."

The words of David aroused painful thoughts in my mind. I came nearer to where the old man sat and I recognized him as that long gray-bearded man whom I had watched in the synagogue on the Day of Atonement.

"Good day," he welcomed me. "Pleasant day, isn't it?"

"Pleasing to some, but hateful to others," I muttered, dejectedly.

"How is that?" he asked, surprised. "Does not a joyful heart bring you into this grove full of the joys of spring?"

"No! Melancholy brings me here," I replied, sadly.

"Melancholy? About what?" he asked, kindly.

"The vanity of human life, dark doubts concerning every accepted idea, make me melancholy and torture my soul," I blurted out glibly.

The old man's face saddened. A dark cloud seemed to spread over his patriarchal features He lowered his eyes to the ground and from his awry features, he seemed to muse over some bitter recollections. He raised his head and I saw large, sparkling tear-drops roll down his cheeks. Then the old man put his hand on my shoulder

and spoke encouragingly:

"I can teach you how to regain your religion and your happiness. Come, let us sit down on that log and I will tell you a story of my life."

He told me a long, long story, closely resembling my own experiences. But though he had become a skeptic he still found he loved many things in the world. He loved animals, he loved flowers, loved the beauty of nature. Then, when he considered the great universe and the marvelous wonders in it, when he studied science and learned the beautiful systematic arrangements of the stars and planets, and when he saw how nature bore all the necessities of life, he could not but believe that only a kindly Supreme Power, invisible and almighty, had created all these and had control over all with a kindly regime.

The old man finished his story and I saw his face beaming. As I looked at him my soul was soothed. The bewildering thoughts slowly vanished. My mind became freer and I began to feel the joy in life. For the first time I noticed leaves had a soothing green and birds a cheerful warble. And between the trees I saw the sun setting and I knew that the Evil One would come no more.

CAROUSAL

From morn till night I am the good Marcel;
I do my work and save.
Aurora sends me through the self-same ways and paths
As any mortal slave.
But when Luna glides into the velvet heavens
I fling from me dull clothes;
I kick and revel, splash in dew,
And cease to think of woes.
But once as I caroused in moonlight
A human came my way—
He did not understand; he said he was the Law,
And carried me away.

HUDY S.

The Jewish Youth--where shall he turn?

By H. A. S.

LIVING, as we do, in an age in which the whys of the universe are apparently being opened to us, one in which some of our scientists are demanding a new conception of God and a newer one of religion, the thoughtful ones among us find ourselves in a serious dilemma when we contemplate the practical aspects of our religious problems.

Indeed, the reflective young Jew is constantly ill at ease with himself. He feels that he has reached the cross-roads. Which road shall he take? How shall he manage? What shall he do?

The road to the right is assimilation. Shall he take that turn? If he does, then he is liberated from traditional religious observances—he then can live, at least outwardly, a more regular and happy life. But somehow the youth feels that this is not the road to happiness. He feels that it is short and yet long; that in time he must reach an impasse in the form of a gnawing, spiritual dissatisfaction.

The path to the left is Reason. This path looks far more inviting. With this path the Jewish youth is far more familiar. He travels upon it daily. And, consequently, its appeal is a simple and strong one. Believe, it says, those things which appear rational and probable. Believe the newest findings of science, for these are based on facts—facts which can be analyzed, substantiated, and investigated. Give your reason free rein. The world is orderly. Study it and you will attain spiritual satisfaction. This is the road on which the Jewish youths are going astray. For this road turns and runs parallel to the road of Assimilation. The two lead from opposite sides to the same pitfall: the loss of Jewish tradition and spirit.

Having looked to the right and to the left, the young Jew looks ahead—yes, that road straight ahead is the continuation of the main road. It is the route of Traditional Judaism. It is a stony way—uneven, and full of rocks and ditches and holes and ruts; but, as it unwinds itself, travel upon it becomes ever lighter and at last the journeyer experiences a serenity of mind and spirit such as he has never previously enjoyed. For this road is long, and yet short.

You have already turned left? Then, with modern frankness, retrace your steps, no matter what the effort. Nothing was ever obtained without effort. And retrace the road by the same process that you entered upon it—by the process of reasoning logically. Reason cannot, must not, should not, and will not be made the footstool of religion. For religion, like passion, is not subject to reason. Religion is intuitive. The object of logic and reason is cold prediction to provide rules for future conduct. But the universe of logic is no more a universe of religion than the art of numerals is the art of sculpture. So turn from the world of reason to the world of God—to freedom and spiritual values. Rules of law are not applied to a medical problem. Why apply reason and logic and scientific material findings to an instrument of the spiritual world? Reason is not a deterrent of religion. Reason and religion are separate and distinct in their fields and utterly different.

Oh yes, the path of logic seems easier. It is surely not rocky, but does that justify choosing it? No; for its pavement is wet and most slippery. If that path could lead to religion we would have as many religions as we have individuals. For the mind of each person operates differently as it is affected by different stimuli. Surely that is not religion. And just as surely religion is "morality plus a deep, inner spiritual feeling."

So, retrace your steps, modern youth! Resolve to walk once more straight ahead along the path stained with the blood of a nation—your nation suffering for the sake of its religion and that alone—suffering vicissitudes such as no other nation has been able to endure.

The Jewish religion promises you no earthly reward. Its rules—numerous though they may be—merely provide for a fundamental righteousness of heart. Deal justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God—that is our religion—a contact with God; or, to use a well known phrase, our religion is "A conversion of the inner nature, in which sin disappears."

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